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ABSTRACT

A 4-day inservice teacher workshop, held so that teachers from a number of countries could share ideas and experiences about foreign language teaching at the elementary school level, is described. Speeches and events of each day are summarized briefly, and plenary sessions are chronicled in somewhat more detail. The latter include: a description of a Croatian project to introduce foreign language instruction in elementary schools, including principal findings concerning program design, learner age, desired teacher characteristics, content, objectives, and teaching conditions; a study of cognitive and affective characteristics of young learners; an overview of elementary school pilot projects in Scotland; discussion of foreign language communication by young learners; notes on German curriculum design; results of a survey of teachers in the Croatian project; description of English language teaching in Viennese (Austria) elementary schools; and perspectives on elementary teacher training and articulation with secondary education. Proceedings of smaller workshops on English, French, and German teaching are also chronicled. Conference social activities and evaluation efforts are noted briefly. Appended materials include a conference schedule, list of participants, sample lesson plans for English, French, German, and Italian, and a list of materials produced in the Croatian project. (MSE)

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Children and Foreign Languages

European Teachers' Seminar
Zagreb, Croatia, 4-7 May 1994

Report

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Council for Cultural Co-operation
In-Service Training Programme for Teachers

Strasbourg 1995

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- the promotion of an awareness of European identity;
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COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL CO-OPERATION (CDCC)
In-Service Training Programme for Teachers

European Teachers' Seminar on

Children and Foreign Languages

Zagreb, Croatia, 4 - 7 May 1994

Report by

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I would like to convey my thanks to all the members of the Croatian project - both the scholars of the University of Zagreb and the teachers at schools - as well as to Mrs Naima Balić of the Croatian Ministry of Culture and Education, for three years of their enthusiasm and hard work, without which neither the project as a whole nor this course would have been possible.

My special thanks are due to Milena Kovačević, junior research assistant in the Project, for her valuable help in compiling this report.

Mirjana Vilke
Director of Studies, Croatian Project

1. Context and Aims of the Croatian Course

Croatia is included in the CDCC medium term programme (1989-1995) on learning and teaching modern languages, entitled "Language Learning for European Citizenship". Two representatives from Croatia, Mirjana Vilke and Yvonne Vrhovac, participated in the workshop 4A in Edinburgh, 2-7 June 1991, and 4B at Sevres, 13-17 December 1993.

The establishment of interaction networks of 20 countries at the Edinburgh workshop was intended to provide an opportunity for the participants to exchange ideas, materials and people, so that the results in the different countries could be brought together in the workshop to be held in France.

The Croatian project of introducing foreign languages into the first grade of primary schools started in the autumn of 1991. Initially, it was a small scale project involving about four hundred children, but as Croatia suffered a war of aggression at that time, it was the maximum that we could afford. Croatian participation in the network between the two workshops for Croatia was limited to sending some materials to other participating countries and attending one or two seminars in the neighbouring countries. Nevertheless, the project was making good progress and involving new generations of young learners. The results were recorded and studied, and materials were produced in spite of the difficult times.

Feeling that there was much more to say about the results of our work than it was possible to do at Sevres, the Croatian Ministry of Education and Culture applied to the Council of Europe for a CDCC course to be held in Zagreb.

Permission and organizational assistance was granted, and the course was organized within a very short time - between December 1993 and May 1994 - in the hope that this would be the best way to share our experience with others interested in early foreign language learning and to solve some of the common problems.

Participants from 11 countries accepted the invitation to come to Zagreb, as well as the four invited speakers, experienced "networkers" well known from Edinburgh and Sevres: Ulrich Bliesener from Germany, Richard Johnstone from Scotland, Daniel Modard from France, and Franz Schimek from Austria. Although invited at a very short notice, they kindly consented to speak on behalf of their own projects.

On the host side, Naima Balić, Senior Adviser at the Ministry of Culture and Education, Mirjana Vilke, Director of Studies of the Croatian project, and Yvonne Vrhovac, Deputy Director of the project, acted as conveners.

The course took place in Zagreb and Stubičke Toplice and lasted for four days.

64 participants were registered: 19 from 11 European countries - Austria, England, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Portugal, Scotland, Slovakia and Spain, and 45 from Croatia. They represented the following professional categories:

- teachers involved in early teaching of foreign languages;
- members of research institutions working in the field;
- persons involved in teacher training;
- persons responsible for the organization and development of primary language teaching;

English and French were the working languages, but interpreting was provided when needed.

2. Proceedings of the Course

Zagreb, Mimara Museum, Wednesday, 4 May 1994, 3 PM

Mirjana Vilke welcomed the participants to the course, to Zagreb and to Croatia, thanking in the first place those who made this seminar possible - the Council of Europe and the Croatian Ministry of Culture and Education. She said that all those who gathered there had very much in common - they all liked children and the language they taught, and that this was the motive that brought together people from so many countries of Europe and from all over Croatia. She stated that there were people in the course who were just at the beginning of their careers, and those who, in their own countries, had already achieved substantial results in this field. They accepted the invitation to come as speakers on a very short notice, so she expressed her thanks to them as well.

Then she said a few words about the people working on the Croatian Project. What characterised the joint work of the people engaged in the Children and Foreign Languages Project - she said - was a tremendous amount of personal input, professional in the first place but emotional as well. They liked what they were doing, they believed in it so that it became more of a hobby, meaning that one actually contributed one's time and effort very generously, trying to achieve one's objective almost passionately.

And what are the ends? The ultimate aim of the undertaking is a future population of native speakers of Croatian who will be able to use one of the major languages of the Western civilization in their life and work. This is why four languages were introduced: English, French, German and Italian. This is why the initiation of the process of learning these languages was moved to the age of 6-7. This is why we decided on having intensive instruction, 5 times a week, 45 minutes per day, in groups of 12-15. It can be assumed that this would provide enough time for each child to reach a high standard of proficiency by the end of the secondary education, when the need to use a foreign language in practical life actually arises.

Mirjana Vilke said that the Project was approaching the end of the third school year and that up to that point the Project had covered three generations of first graders who had their foreign language from the first day of schooling. About 1,500 children were included in the Project, which was not a large number, but owing to the wartime conditions and limited funds Croatia couldn't afford more.

She ended by saying: "For the next four days you will be able to witness our achievements, by observing the children, inspecting the materials that we have produced and discussing the presentations of the project members. We are well aware of the many problems that remain to be solved in our future work. This is where we expect your help. We are ready to teach and to learn, to pass on our experience and to benefit from yours. Please, feel at home here and enjoy every minute of your stay."

Yvonne Vrhovac addressed the participants in French. She first expressed her great pleasure and honour in having the opportunity to organize such an important course. She reminded the participants of the difficult times Croatia had been going through over the past three years.

The fact that the participants had come from so many European countries, she pointed out, proved that they trusted Croatia as a host country and were interested in our experience and achievements in this field.

She expressed her hope that acquaintance with the Croatian experience would not only make possible an exchange of ideas but would also form a sound basis for future cooperation towards the common goal: teaching foreign languages for a new generation of citizens of Europe in the 21st century.

Naima Balić stressed that the course was a significant event for Croatia, as only a year and three months had passed from the day that we joined the CDCC. Early learning of foreign languages had quite a tradition in this country - she said - as already in the seventies a pilot project to this effect was initiated by foreign language departments, primarily by the English Department of the Faculty of Philosophy, Zagreb University.

What characterised the present project was a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and hard work on the part of everybody concerned, who, in spite of the war difficulties, kept the project going and achieved significant results.

Mrs Balić was very pleased with the arrival of participants from other countries and deeply regretted that the participants from Bosnia - Hercegovina could not come owing to transportation problems.

A great deal has been achieved over the past three years - she said - and pointed out the range of materials, including textbooks, theoretical books, video materials, etc., produced by the project people. Furthermore, it is planned that 10% of the entire school population will have been included into the scheme of early learning by 1998, which would involve 80 out of the existing 815 schools.

She wished all the participants a successful and enjoyable stay in Zagreb.

The opening ceremony ended with a lively and colourful contribution by children included in the project. They communicated in all four of the languages taught.

For a start, young German learners sang the following songs for the audience: *Wer? Wie? Was?, Die Wochentage, Die Monate* and *Meine Familie.*

In French, the children produced a collage of songs and rhymes describing different domestic and wild animals - their size, colour, movements, feeding - all this accompanied by appropriate gestures and mimicry. Another group performed a dialogue between the waiter and a customer in a restaurant which, oddly enough, they couldn't offer any of the dishes that the customer wanted.

In English, they presented a modern version of Little Red Riding-hood in which the young lady is very self-assured, the wolf rather shy, and the granny a well kept middle aged woman of the world. At the end, Little Red Riding-hood gives a press conference.

The children learning Italian were more poetic. They devoted their five minutes to performing a story about the garden and spring, and a little butterfly which had lost its colour and the children helped him by painting beautiful colours all over his body and wings. Their singing was also about spring, which was quite in keeping with the lovely weather in Zagreb that day.

The working part of the course started with Mirjana Vilke's introduction to the Croatian project. In her presentation she spoke about its theoretical background and the results achieved so far. (English, summary in French).

After the coffee break, Jelena Mihaljević Djigunović presented a piece of research undertaken for the Croatian project and conducted by Božica Bartolović and herself, studying the cognitive and affective characteristics of young language learners. (English, summary in French).

Last that day was the presentation of our invited speaker, Richard Johnstone, on data gathering procedures in the Scottish project. He presented a brief overview of the Scottish project as well. (English, summary in French).

The day ended with the reception for the participants held at a nearby Club (Klub Kulturnih Radnika), where quite a rich display of national and international culinary specialities were offered. Bottles of quality wine helped to break the ice and familiarise the participants with one another and with Croatia.

Thursday, 5 May

Alas, it was a rainy day. The first thing in the morning the participants were taken to different primary schools in Zagreb to observe work in the classes. Each participant could choose the language and the grade (first, second or third) to observe. After the classes, there followed animated discussions with teachers, as well as observations of the pupils' products - drawings, sketches, self-made toys, plasticine figures etc. From the schools the participants were taken back to the city centre and transferred to Stubičke Toplice, a thermal spa where the rest of the seminar was going to take place.

As it was raining heavily, the real beauty of the countryside did not show up on the way to the spa.

The work was resumed at about 4 pm.

The participants continued their work in English, French and German workshops. A survey of the work in the workshops is given in chapter IV.

This long day ended with a dinner and "An international evening", which was rather unstructured but nevertheless helped the participants to get to know each other better and relax after hard work, while singing and enjoying a glass of wine.

Friday, 6 May

The first part of the morning was reserved for additional plenary lectures.

Yvonne Vrhovac reported (in French, summary in English) on foreign language communication strategies of the young learners in the Croatian project. Several studies of story-telling in French were undertaken to examine both the language behaviour of two communicants and their social roles in communication.

This report was followed by a presentation of the invited speaker **Ulrich Bliesener** on designing a curriculum for teaching foreign languages in German primary schools.

Both presentations provoked more questions than could be answered in the relatively short time allotted to discussion, which nevertheless continued over coffee. The rest of the morning was devoted to language workshops.

Three workshops were organized: English, French and German and they dealt with the specific problems of each language being taught and its socio-cultural components. The work in the workshops also reflected what can be called the "group dynamics" of the participants, as well as of the animators.
(See the Survey of Workshop Activities, Chapter 4)

In the afternoon session **Nives Sironić-Bonefačić** gave her presentation (in French, summary in English). She spoke about a research undertaken in the Croatian project on reading and writing in early foreign language teaching. The report included an analysis of the data obtained from a total of 755 French, English and Italian learners.

Another interesting contribution followed. The invited speaker **Franz Schimek**, speaking about comprehension and expression activities in the Austrian project, impressed the audience with his audio-visual introduction: he showed van Gogh's picture of a starry night accompanied by a well-known, tender song devoted to van Gogh and the starry night.

After the coffee break, **Daniel Modard**, another invited speaker, spoke about the training of teachers for elementary schools and the need for continuity in secondary schools (in French, summary in English). He presented a number of problems related to the French situation.

Mr Modard's presentation was a very good introduction to the discussion of problems of teacher training and continuity. There was some hesitation as to whether to have two separate discussions on this burning issue - one in English and another in French - but most of the participants decided after all on a plenary session.

Although the discussion was initially planned to be a round table discussion, it turned out to be more of a presentation. It was given by **Smiljana Narančić Kovač**, who teaches English to the first generation of Croatian primary school class teachers so that they can themselves teach English after completing a 4 year course at the Teacher Training College. The new model of a primary school teacher who can teach a foreign language in the first four years of primary education was proposed only two years ago and has recently been introduced on an experimental basis.

On the basis of a questionnaire completed by the students of the Teacher Training College, Mrs Narančić Kovač spoke of the many problems that would need to be solved before the young students can take the role of the both English and class teachers.

Throughout the day, **Inja Skender**, junior research assistant on the Croatian project, did a very good job interpreting animated discussions from French into English and vice versa.

After dinner there was a musical evening. Ana Vidović, a fourteen year old Croatian guitar player and holder of a number of prizes, performed a well-chosen repertoire of classical music. Nobody needed an interpreter for that, and her performance was received with enthusiasm. (On this and an entertaining follow up see A Glance at the Social Activities, Chapter V.)

Saturday, 7 May

Everybody still worked hard, although there was a feeling in the air that of course coming to its end. The morning was used to convey the issues raised in the English workshop to the French party and vice versa, with Inja Skender again playing the role of interpreter when needed.

The foreign participants were given a few minutes each to present the situation concerning early learning of foreign languages in their countries. They all used the opportunity, and it was again a very informative morning.

Mutual thanks, flowers and promises to keep in touch marked the end of the scientific programme of the course.

In the meantime, the weather improved and after lunch a coach was ready to take the participants on a "tour of historic and scenic sights of Hrvatsko Zagorje", as marked in the course programme. (For more details, see Chapter V.)

3. SURVEY OF PLENARY PRESENTATIONS

In the order of appearance in the programme

Mirjana Vilke, University of Zagreb

Introducing the Croatian Project

We actually started to look for an optimal age to begin institutionalized learning of foreign languages in the seventies, when in a series of "natural experiments" we tested the phenomenon of language-learning blocks which, according to Lenneberg (1967), appear at puberty. For reasons that now appear quite transparent, the project which began in 1973 did not produce spectacular results, but it did provide insights that helped us to shape the present project. Consequently, when we started in 1991, it was not from scratch.

We directed our efforts in two interrelated directions. One was the investigation of different aspects of children's performance, conducted by applied linguists and psychologists using the methods of research employed in the field - tests, questionnaires, interviews. Another was the actual work of teachers in the class. The teachers - and the children were lucky to get the best of their kind - were encouraged to use their own creative ways of teaching, depending on their intuition and requirements of the individual

groups of learners, as well as their own (i.e., the teachers') personality traits. There were a few conditions that had to be fulfilled though, one of them being that the teachers should make children happy and relaxed during the classes to secure receptive learning with "no weeds and big stones" to struggle with, to use Curran's metaphor.

At the present stage of the project we can offer tentative answers to questions about:

- optimal age,
- characteristics and abilities of children of this age,
- model of the teacher,
- selection of the linguistic material,
- fluency and accuracy of children s performance,
- optimal conditions.

Here are some brief answers.

Optimal age

Although this may be arguable, it seems that the first grade (age 6 to 7) is a good time to start. The work of people like Piaget (1973), Lenneberg (1967), Krashen (1973), Stern (1969), Long (1988), to mention only some of the specialists in the field, directly or indirectly supports the thesis theoretically, and the results of our project work up to now confirm it quite convincingly.

Characteristics and abilities of children aged 6 or 7

- Children of this age become emotionally attached to the teacher to such an extent that this may become a decisive factor in their attitude towards the foreign language they are learning.

- They should experience the process of learning English as a kind of game to which they will be eager to contribute meteorically, emotionally and intellectually.

- Some children are extremely shy at the beginning and they must be given an opportunity to join in when they are ready, not when it pleases the teacher.

- Children of this age cannot concentrate on one activity for more than five to ten minutes.

The model of the teacher

Children need a leader for all their games - that is, a teacher who will dance and sing with them, play with them, draw and act with them. All this is not only intellectually and emotionally demanding but is also tough physical work. Few people realise what traps are hidden for the teacher in the acronym TPR (total physical response).

The teacher must love both children and the work that she is doing - we could almost coin a new acronym, TER (total emotional response), which should be the rule governing all her activities.

Selection of the linguistic material

Should the linguistic material presented to the children be selected and graded according to accepted didactic principles - from known to unknown, from simple to more complex - or should they be exposed to the language input no matter how complex it may be?

The situation in our project has been half way between that of second and that of foreign language learning: five periods of weekly contact with English in groups of 12 to 15 gives the children ample time for some linguistic structures to be internalised spontaneously. But at the same time one should not overlook the fact that children of that age are not yet cognitively ready, even in their mother tongue, to accept everything that a language has to offer.

Fluency and accuracy

Which of the two should be given priority? Again, a very difficult question with no simple answer. I shall attempt a very brief one: with seven-year-olds, accuracy in pronunciation should be insisted upon as children will never again live to acquire it with such ease, while work on grammatical accuracy should be postponed until the learner reaches the age and stage of developed cognitive maturity.

Optimal conditions for teaching English to children aged 6-7

Here again I will refer to the conditions that work in our socio-cultural environment: five periods of weekly teaching distributed evenly throughout the working days, teaching in groups of 12 to 15 learners, with a teacher specially interested in the work with this age group and additionally trained through seminars and workshops - all this seems to work very well.

Jelena Mihaljević Djigunović, University of Zagreb
Božica Bartolović, University of Zagreb

Cognitive and Affective Characteristics of the Young FL Learner

In their paper entitled "Cognitive and Affective Characteristics of the Young FL Learner", Božica Bartolović and Jelena Mihaljević Djigunović discussed the learner factors aspect of early beginning. Starting from the widely accepted assumption that cognitive and affective characteristics significantly influence approaches to language teaching and learning, and ultimately, the outcome of learning, the authors stressed that the awareness of learner characteristics and individual differences among language learners can sensitize teachers to possible variations in learner reactions to teaching and to differences in learning strategies.

The results of two lines of research were presented: one concerned the level of the children's cognitive development, the other dealt with the learners' attitudinal characteristics. The children' s cognitive development level was measured by means of tests of learning readiness, These tests, consisting of five sub-tests, yielded very high results, which were attributed to two possible sources: the fact that the tests were administered after several weeks of school, which might have led to higher than normative average results, and the fact that the young beginners were in a way selected pupils (they were enrolled into the FL class because of their parents wish). An additional small-scale study aimed at finding out whether FLL was detrimental to achievement in other school subjects showed that FLL had neither positive nor negative effects on the learning of other subjects. The attitudinal study was carried out by a specially constructed interview, consisting of 22 questions, which investigated the young learners attitudes towards the foreign language they were learning, towards its native speakers, towards possible benefits of FLL, towards FL lessons, and the optimal age for FLL.

The results obtained showed that the young beginners in the Zagreb Projects entered the learning process with highly positive attitudes towards the FL and towards learning it. A vast majority loved their FL classes. They believed it was good to know the FL in question but were not always able to supply a rational reason for it. They seemed to derive enjoyment from of the activities they did in class and, probably, from having the teacher they liked. Their attitudes were definitely influenced by their parents. Most of the beginners had some idea about the native speakers of the FL and most made positive evaluations of them. In a follow-up study the authors will check for changes in these initial attitudes during the three years of learning a particular FL.

Richard Johnstone, University of Stirling

Data Gathering Procedures in the Scottish Project

Mr Johnstone first presented an overview of the national pilot projects in Scotland. There are now 12 such projects, each consisting of a secondary school and its associated primary school (total 80). Piloting began in 1989, while the post-generalisation phase begins in autumn 1994. The teaching model of the pilots consisted mainly of a visiting teacher from the secondary school working with the primary class teacher. At the generalisation phase, teaching will be mainly by primary class teachers and a major training initiative is taking place at present.

The independent evaluation of the Scottish national pilot projects is being done by a team of four researchers at the University of Stirling. The evaluation began in 1990, its aims being:

- the assessment of linguistic attainments of children involved in the pilot projects, including comparison with those children not involved;

- the evaluation of project courses, including description of and commentary on factors such as the nature of the course and pedagogical methods which enhance or inhibit the linguistic performance of the children involved

As for the types of data-gathering applied in the independent evaluation, the following procedures have been used:

- interviews with key persons in authority;

- observation of lessons, by use of observation checklists;

- paired interviews in FL: researcher plus group of two pupils at a time;

- vocabulary retrieval task, using computer;

- pupil attitude interviews in L1;

- questionnaire simulation for pupils' perceptions of learning strategy;

- interviews with teachers;

- study of class tests and examinations provided by schools.

According to Mr Johnstone, the aims of introducing foreign languages into early primary education are not self-evident; on the basis of research work in the project, "what we can do is to make some tentative hypotheses and not any definite conclusions," he said.

Mr Johnstone pointed out that in the Scottish project they rejected the idea of interviewing the children individually, as it was argued that this could be a stressful experience for the child; instead, paired interviews were used; children could choose what they would like to talk about (bring photographs or something they had done in class); Johnstone pointed out that being in pairs the pupils could build up their mutual communication and even ask the interviewer some questions.

In the evaluation part of the Scottish project, 8- and 11-year-olds were asked, among other things, what advice they would give to someone who would like to learn the foreign language they were learning. In this way, the project workers wanted to see how learning strategies were perceived by young children, that is, how they represented themselves what they thought was important to do when learning a foreign language; in the analysis of the obtained data, the Scottish project applied the model of learning strategies as reported in the literature on adult learning strategies: meta-cognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies. Johnstone summarized the general findings as follows: no meta-cognitive strategies were found in 8-year-olds, yet some were found in 11-year-olds; cognitive strategies were found to be prevalent with both groups of children; none of the 8-year-olds mentioned anything that would belong to social/affective strategies; by contrast, 11-year-olds did mention language anxiety.

In the short debate on whether, and to what extent, the models of adult learning strategies can be applied to children's strategies, Johnstone replied that he was quite aware that the area of research had only begun to make its first steps, that what was important to them was to see how the children themselves perceived what they were doing in a foreign language, and argued that this perception need not necessarily match the actual "doing" of the child.

Yvonne Vrhovac, University of Zagreb

Foreign Language Communication by Young Learners

Young learners do not have any real need or motivation to learn a foreign language and so the need must be created by skilful teaching. There are two sorts of activities that children particularly like and that the curriculum should provide for.

First are those activities in which children can play in and with a language (nursery rhymes, counting-out rhymes, songs, poems, plays). Second is story-telling. Stories are very suitable for teaching a foreign language because of their repetitive form (on the lexical and sytanical levels) and because of the possibility they offer to children to imagine and create stories independently. Stories are always accompanied by pictures which have a very important role in story-telling. They represent what is told in the story, but used independently they can stimulate the child to create a personal commentary on a picture or even a whole story.

We have carried out several studies on story-telling in a foreign language by young learners. The aim was to examine both the language behaviour of two participants and their social roles during communication. The roles of the communicators develop in the communicative act through mutual help. Communication can be realised only because they both rely on all kinds of strategies and a great deal of good will to reach an end.

In our latest research we examined how 8 year old children can describe 3 - 4 pictures that they have never seen before. The pictures represented scenes that the children had previously talked about with their teachers. We were interested in whether they were capable of using the acquired vocabulary and structures in a new situation. Children were interviewed one by one at the end of their second year of learning a foreign language (English, French, German or Italian) and the interviews were recorded on tape. Transcripts were made and then we examined the interviewer's and the learners' communicative strategies - strategies of avoidance and strategies of confrontation of difficulties. In the children's language, some consciously or unconsciously used strategies were the following:

- holophrase,
- code switching (to the mother tongue or another foreign language),
- asking for help (*kak se kaže* + the word needed),
- creating new words,
- using a word from the mother tongue but with the L2 pronunciation and intonation,
- whispering of an utterance when uncertain,

- two parallel discourses by the same child - the first when describing a picture = marks of the 3rd person, and the second used as if the child were a person in the picture = marks of the 1st person,

- more complicated utterances with two or three elements but showing difficulties in expression such as interruption, hesitation, pauses, sighing, etc.

The examiner's strategies included repeating a question, using Yes-No questions, reformulating a question, offering part of the answer already in the question, giving the beginning of a needed word, etc.

We consider that most of the communication was successfully accomplished thanks to the effort that the two communicators invested in the social act. Considering the principle formulated for the Palo Alto pathological communicative situations which says that "it is not possible not to communicate", we estimate that in the situation that we describe our young learners have proved capable of using foreign languages properly in new situations and shown a certain degree of communicative competence.

Ulrich Bliesener, Ministry of Culture, Hannover

Designing a Curriculum for Teaching Foreign Languages in Primary Schools - German Perspective

In the last three or four years the teaching of foreign languages in Germany has received new attention from both parents and administrators. It has been recognised that knowledge of foreign languages is something that nobody can do without in the coming single internal market of the European Community if he wants to avail himself of the professional and career opportunities that free movement within the Community will offer to all European citizens.

Furthermore, recent events in Eastern Europe have added an extra emphasis to this. It is obvious that the peaceful co-existence of so many nations and cultures in a unified Europe, overcoming the narrow boundaries of the European Community, will crucially depend on communication among the people and intercultural understanding.

In this context, the teaching of foreign languages in primary schools has also gained in importance. Today, Germany, like other European countries, is undergoing changes which also affect early language learning. Thus, Hesse is expanding and diversifying a 30-year-old scheme of primary English (and primary French) in some 150 schools, from the third year onwards (age 8). On the basis of previous research, Lower Saxony has prepared for the introduction of primary English for all children in the third grade from 1994.

There are a number of problems still to be solved in connection with early foreign language teaching: should there be a defined curriculum, what is the appropriate methodology, what characterizes good material, how can secondary schools best make use of what primary schools have achieved in their foreign language classes, what training should future teachers receive in order to master the difficult task of teaching young children.

Mr Bliesener finds that pedagogical justification for introducing early foreign language teaching in primary schools lies in the general development of the child's linguistic competence, intellectual competence and international literacy. Furthermore, for the educational context of Germany he proposes that the role of the primary FI teacher should be taken by the primary class teacher. As for the type of early FI curriculum needed, he holds that an *open curriculum framework* would suit best both on the wide-scale, or national, level and on the level of individual needs. Mr Bliesener thinks that this type of curriculum would be demanding, as it would require definite decisions on the part of the teacher and his/her active individual contribution. Hence, the proposed curriculum "may be a risk", after all. Yet, if introduced, the curriculum should be presented to parents and children, said Mr Blisener. In conclusion, he expressed an urgent need for teachers, professors of methodology and administrators to be brought together.

Nives Sironić-Bonefačić, University of Zagreb

Reading and Writing in Early Foreign Language Teaching

The experimental introduction of foreign languages into the first grade of primary schools in Croatia has raised the issue - for both teachers and researchers - of elaborating and monitoring the process of gradual transfer from oral communication to reading and writing in class.

After a short theoretical introduction on skills development, Mrs Sironić Bonefačić reported the findings obtained on the basis of questionnaires filled by the foreign language teachers taking part in the Croatian project. The report included a meticulous analysis of the data from 54 foreign language classes (French, English and Italian) with a total of 755 learners. As teachers of German did not participate in the study, no data were obtained on German classes.

The following elements were analyzed on the basis of the questionnaire:

- number of foreign language learners per grade,
- number of learners who could read and write Croatian before formal education and foreign language teaching,
- number of learners who have problems with reading and writing L1 and L2,
- approaches to reading and writing, methodological procedures in class,
- frequency of reading and writing activities in class and at home, amount of work done individually by the learner,
- learners' attitudes towards reading and writing,
- L1/L2 interference on the orthographic level,
- common errors in early writing and reading,
- teaching materials,
- teachers' attitudes to reading and writing.

In the concluding part of the report, Mrs Sironić Bonefačić pointed to some typical characteristics of the shift to early foreign language reading and writing. In all the languages taught the shift is influenced by the child's cognitive maturity at that age, the specific school setting and the impact of L1.

Franz Schimek, Education Adviser for Vienna

Comprehension and Expression Activities in the Austrian Project

Mr Schimek gave an overall view of English language teaching in the Viennese primary schools and of the more recent school initiatives in Vienna. In order to illustrate the basic principles of English language teaching in the Austrian primary schools, Mr Shcimek produced with his presentation a kind of "estrangement effect", as he activated the world of imagination and emotions in his audience with paintings and music devoted to Van Gogh. His point was that English language teaching in the Viennese primary schools was of the kind he himself strongly believed in. The teaching is *holistic*, that is, based on the principle that a whole thing or being is more than just a sum of its parts; *colourful*, that is, exciting the senses of imagination; *challenging*, that is, needing the full use of one's abilities and effort; *light*, that is, easy to do, not tiring, intended for entertainment; and, *activity-based* and *child- centred*, focusing on the development of oral communication.

All children in Austria start learning English, and sometimes French, at age of eight, that is, in their third grade of primary education. The foreign language teaching is compulsory, comprising one period a week, with no grades, and is done by the primary teacher.

In the Austrian project entitled "Lollipop", which at present includes 88 classes in Vienna, English teaching is shifted from third to first graders and, as in Austria foreign language instruction forms part of the training for regular primary school teachers, the project's work is done by the primary teachers. Participation in the project is essentially voluntary, and if a primary teacher applies for it, he/she must take a training course before entering the class of first graders. Mr Schimek holds that the project cannot be introduced on the national level as there are serious continuity problems, which "we (meaning: we in Austria) are not going to solve for ten years".

As Mr Schimek argued that foreign language teaching should not be a burden but an enrichment for the child, he pointed out that oral activities, or what he called day-dream activities, should prevail in early FL teaching, while reading and writing should not be introduced at all in the early stage. According to Schimek, reading and writing should be introduced at later stages only as "supportive skills".

Daniel Modard, University of Rouen

Training of teachers for elementary schools and continuity with secondary schools

The teaching of foreign languages in elementary schools is an irreversible phenomenon in most European countries today. This is because public opinion approves of this type of teaching and also because the preliminary results show that this is a good initiative. All those who participate in this operation wish for the continuation of the initiative. However, although there is an agreement amongst all the participants to continue this kind of teaching, there is also a diversity of viewpoints. Whenever we try to tackle the question of objectives (why teach a foreign language to children?), we tend to look at the methodological orientations needed to facilitate this type of learning.

The pre-secondary teaching of a foreign language poses a variety of problems. The French experimentation with this type of teaching revealed some of these problems:

- Children. Pupils who learn a foreign language at school are mostly aged between 8 and 12 years. At this age, they are at a developmental stage where they try to organise their environment and have the desire to learn to manage their relations with others. In order to succeed, the initiation into a foreign language needs to be based on educational methods which favour success and which rest on curiosity and "the children s desire to do".In this context, we encourage general objectives rather than objectives based on content.

- Teachers. There is a debate as to who should do this kind of teaching, especially on a long term basis (primary school teachers themselves, secondary school teachers, or any other person outside school). A general agreement should be reached on this type of teaching.

- Training. It is the objective which we seek to attain that is important, and not the content. We should try to go beyond the linguistic objectives: to teach a foreign language is also to teach how to communicate.

- Content. The objective is to integrate this type of teaching into primary school education. The children must have the utility of the language and have pleasure in playing with the language.

At the moment, the pre-secondary teaching of foreign languages is perceived as something marginal:

- In France, there are still not many primary school teachers who teach their pupils foreign languages. The problem is at times even more serious: whenever somebody from outside the school comes in to teach a foreign language, the class teacher does not participate but, instead, benefits from the intervention and does some other things.

- In the schools where foreign languages are taught, it is surprising to find that foreign books are not available in their libraries. This proves that the foreign languages are looked upon as being exterior to the schools.

All this shows that teacher training is the root of the problem. The French experimentation in this field shows that the most important question in the years to come will be: how to proceed so that primary school teachers themselves can teach foreign languages, taking note of the fact that there should be continuity with secondary school teaching.

In France, this is a serious problem because it is normally the secondary school teachers who do this kind of teaching. The 1992 Report by the General Inspectorate of National Education on *the evaluation of the pre-secondary teaching of foreign languages* shows this very clearly: in the region of Lille, 79.8% of foreign language teachers in primary schools are secondary school teachers (70% in Clermont-Ferrand, 58% in Lyon, for example).

There are other categories of people who also teach in primary schools: people from outside the school (about 40% in most regions) and primary school teachers (mostly young teachers who have just finished their training and who do not have fixed classes). The problem of teacher training in the pre-secondary teaching domain is quite urgent at present. The most important questions are: What type of teachers? Which languages? What should be privileged: language awareness or learning in general?

From a general point of view, it is clear that problems are different between the *initial training programme* (for those who have not started teaching yet) and the *special teacher training programme* (for those who have already begun teaching). In the former case, the training is obligatory, but the trainees do not know the real problems that one encounters in class, whereas in the latter case the training is not a must and it attracts only those who are motivated enough. Whatever the situation, the training institutions should take into account the local context and a certain number of real-life factors. In the case of the special training programme, the audiences may often be heterogenous. There is a need, therefore, to find coherence in the general organisation of the institution. Coherence is vital, as several people come to teach during the training. Under these conditions, it is not easy to make the trainers come to the same point of view and the same way of treating a particular problem.

Nowadays there is a desire to put foreign language teaching into the hands of primary school teachers. However, the potential pool of people capable of doing this work is very limited. The 1992 General Inspectorate Report shows that, in France, 15% of the primary school teachers take up the option of foreign language teaching for their professional examinations. Out of these future teachers, 75% opt for English, 10.5% for German, 9.5% for Spanish, 4% for Italian and only 1% for other languages.

All training suggestions need to take into account three points: ministerial policy, difficulties posed by the language, diversification and fixed objectives. In the field of elementary (pre-secondary) teaching of foreign languages, the seriousness of purpose that is required for the learning of a foreign language must be compatible with the wish of the child to discover another culture and its specific forms of social communication.

4. A SURVEY OF WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

The English workshop, Thursday 5 May and Friday 6 May

Lidvina Štokić spoke about integrating foreign language classes with other school subjects such as basic science, physical education and music classes. She presented some ideas on how topics from these subjects could be used as a basis for work in the FL classes and discussed the advantages of such work.

Mirjana Tomašević-Dančević spoke about art and maths in the medium of EFL with 6-10 year-olds. A strong supporter of cross-curricular teaching, she believes that art is extremely suitable for foreign language teaching to very young learners as they generally love drawing, painting, modelling and all sorts of building activities. Furthermore, children of this age are imaginative, curious and open to new experience. In integrated English classes of this sort, the teacher and the pupils use language in meaningful contexts, and children can "learn through doing". In this way the teacher can effectively reach linguistic aims by non-linguistic activities (art activities), while the pupils feel relaxed and content. As for teaching maths at English classes, she pointed out that the programme had not only given young learners the opportunity to work meaningfully with limited language but had also improved and reinforced their general knowledge of the subject. On the basis of her teaching experience, she claimed that the children had come to love maths and had become more sensitive to (maths) problems in real life.

Mija Jagatić reported on her observation of two groups of learners over the period of two years: one group consisted of 15 pupils having 45 minute English classes five days a week within the project, and the other group consisted of 30 pupils, having 45 minute English classes two days a week. The group included in the project had the opportunity to acquire EFL in situations close to those in which children acquire ESL, whereas the focus in teaching the group of 30 was EFL learning rather than ESL acquisition. The comparison was made to show what differences arose from such different conditions and how they modified the techniques of instruction. She discussed the teaching techniques that proved successful in one and the other group.

Vida Nikpalj stressed that the motivation of young learners is highly aroused when they are emotionally involved and given the opportunity to express themselves in an enjoyable way. She emphasised the importance of the child's physical movements giving him the chance to build up his confidence. According to V. Nikpalj, the period of listening and input should be respected individually and each learner should be given the choice of starting to speak when he or she is ready for it. Once confidence is built, children join in without being pushed, and they do amazing things. The precondition for this is that the

learner should trust the teacher and the teacher should trust the learner. Also, Mrs Nikpalj showed a part of the English programme for young language learners that she was preparing for Croatian Television.

Maja Rijavec presented her book *Me, too*, a beginner's course for primary school children aged 6-10. The first level of the material was published by Školska knjiga, Zagreb, in 1993. In particular, she spoke about the philosophy of teaching, personal beliefs and guiding principles underlying the course design of the material, which had been piloted by the author herself and improved through intensive practice with several generations of young learners. Having also artistic talents, Mrs Rijavec illustrated the whole of the material herself.

The syllabus is based on an integral approach, respecting both functional and structural criteria for the choice of the language material and its sequencing. The course assumes an activity-based methodology: language is introduced as a medium for activities and tasks with non-linguistic aims. Furthermore, learning is combined with fun, stressing the importance of context. The material is organized around activities which require natural and meaningful interaction in the target language. The context is either imaginative or such as to create an immediate, genuine need for the use of language. The matter-of-fact register and naive stereotypes are avoided, as are also questions about obvious facts.

The tasks in the course are designed to stimulate physical involvement whenever it is possible respecting the TPR (total physical response) principle, as well as the principle of handling tactile objects. The suggested activities offer varied dynamics: PE lessons, action games, dramatizations, party games, board and card games, drawing, modelling.

At the initial level the emphasis is placed upon listening and speaking skills; but reading and writing are also introduced very early in the course in a natural and casual way, only in situations which require this kind of communication. Some subjects of the mainstream curriculum are integrated with the language course from the very beginning. In this way PE, Dramatic Expression, Music, Art, Maths, and, at later levels, Science and Geography, are incorporated.

It is of crucial importance that language material should be systematically recycled throughout the course in new and different contexts.

Hopscotch in English, a picture and story book for young learners, written by Verica Zorić (published by Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 1993), was presented by **Mija Jagatić**. She pointed out the main thematic elements of the book, its marvellous illustrations being most prominent in the final part which deals with the story of Alice in Wonderland.

Višnja Anić, who is not a project member but is known as the most prolific author of children's textbooks and picture books for learning English, presented some of her many books.

Jelena Mihaljević Djigunović summarized the issues brought up in the workshop by making the following points:

"In the English workshop we got an overview of what the practising teachers in the Croatian project were faced with in the beginning and what they have got now - after almost three years of working on the Project. We obtained a very good idea about how far they have gone.

What they had at the beginning was a little knowledge (about the learner factors), some experience in teaching small children and a lot of enthusiasm.

What they did not have was a syllabus, experience in cross-curricular teaching, and ready-made materials.

How far have they gone?

They know now what they can do with seven-year-olds (in a group of 12) - they know how important it is to give the children a chance to be physical, how readily a 7-year-old picks up the language that he or she is exposed to every day, and how vital it is to cater for the children s interests and short concentration spans.

Our practising teachers shared with us their experience in teaching the children of this age to learn through play. We were presented with ways in which, thanks to cross-curricular teaching, the young beginners were able to develop their mind, creativity, self-confidence and independence and also come to love the other school subjects through English. (The school subjects integrated into the curriculum were art, maths, basic science, physical education, and music.)

We also had a chance to see several teaching materials intended for work with young beginners, among them one set that is the result of the author's experience in the Project but also of her intuitions and personal philosophy about teaching English to such young children.

The idea that was felt to be underlying everything that was discussed and shown in the English workshop was that a seven-year-old is open to learning English and that, if we make learning a pleasurable activity and carefully decide what to do, when to do it and how to do it, we almost cannot fail to induce learning."

The French workshop, Thursday 5 May and Friday 6 May

This proved to be a very busy and lively workshop, abounding with presentations of practical teaching procedures. Many participants said they had benefited a lot from it.

Mladen Pokić presented several activities to be done in French classes of physical education. The activities can be very useful for mastering the specific vocabulary (movements, clothes, animals).

Gordana Jelenski explored ways of teaching the spatial concepts in French.

Dubravka Šernhorst presented her approach to introducing the vegetable vocabulary. Children make their own drawings and figures of vegetables. The new words are presented in the written form and in such a way that the child has to connect a word with the corresponding picture. Children can also make their own garden or model different vegetable plants. Games of memory and puzzles can be used as well.

Alemka Vrcan focused on activities stimulating oral and written expression and understanding. She showed how the sentences of a poem, written on small pieces of paper, could be used to practise basic French grammar.

Tamara Zobenica was interested in the ways in which the vocabulary related to town/city could be introduced and used in class. Her pupils made little models of Zagreb after having had a long walk downtown and then used French, with her help, to express which route they had taken or what buildings they had seen.

Jasna Gajić showed how a story can be successfully dramatized in class.

Jadranka Strabić presented a maths class in French.

The participants of the workshop inspected the teaching materials produced in the Croatian project for early French and Italian foreign language teaching.

Inja Skender gave a critical review of *Bonjour, Mimi*, a workbook by Yvonne Vrhovac and Željka Horvat Vukelja (Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 1993).

The workbook is intended for young French learners. It consists of 32 units, each with a clearly defined aim of developing oral expression. At the same time, the units provide an excellent background for some non-verbal activities, such as drawing, which encourage the child's creativity. A limited range of the vocabulary related to the child's world - animals, colours, numbers, toys, family, friends - is gradually introduced with the drawings. The illustrations are only black- and-white, so that the children themselves can colour the drawings the way they like it. Mimi is the name of a little caterpillar leading the child throughout the book. Maths, art and music are integrated into the overall lexical content of the book. Some units have illustrated French rhymes and songs that can be easily learnt by the child with the help of the teacher; they represent cultural elements as

they are part of the French tradition and civilization. Also, holidays common to both French and Croatian culture are mentioned. At the end of the workbook there is an appendix with rhymes and songs, as well as unit-by-unit suggestions for teachers.

Mladen Pokić presented *Ca va Toto?* (Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 1994), which is a continuation of the above workbook and is written by the same authors.

This workbook shifts the emphasis from oral expression to reading and writing, so that the child can get acquainted with written French words for the first time. The workbook visual elements are closely linked with the graphic and phonetic realisation of what they represent. Some problematic features of French orthography are dealt with systematically, again via topics and vocabulary related to the child's world (school, sport, fruits, vegetables). Three traditional French tales, presented in a juxtaposition of the written word and drawings, introduce the cultural element. There are also writing exercises in the form of cross-word puzzles with the known lexis. At the end of the book there is a useful appendix with numerous suggestions for the teacher.

As there was no Italian workshop, owing to a very small number of participants interested in teaching Italian at an early age, the authors of the Italian language teaching manual, *Vieni con me 1* (published by Skolska knjiga, Zagreb, 1994), **Ingrid Damiani Einwalter, Mirjana Marković Marinković** and **Nives Sironić-Bonefačić** presented their work in the French workshop.

Vieni con me, Part I, is a beginners' course for children aged 8-10 and is intended for the teaching of Italian as a foreign language in primary schools. The main didactic objective of the book is to present the children with a linguistic model and encouraging them to master and use the basic linguistic structures. Priority is given to the spoken language, its oral use and understanding, followed by the reproduction and creative application of the mastered forms. The subject matter of the course has been selected so as to correspond to the pupils' interest and immediate experience. The presentation of structures and vocabulary has been carefully graded in ten didactic units. Each consists of a brief dialogue graphically presented in the text, using different operational models. The visual presentation of the characters and the physical setting facilitates the understanding of the subject matter and provides support and motivation for the linguistic message. At the end of the units, there is a supplement presenting Italian customs and holidays, and these can be covered in class at the appropriate time of the year.

The teacher's function is to present the material in class and to facilitate understanding and creative use of the language with the help of exercises and lively games. *Vieni con me* encourages the pupils to understand and use the language and provides a helping hand to guide the pupils through a new linguistic and cultural experience.

The German workshop, Thursday 5 May

The number of participants in the workshop was not large, but everybody thought the work was well organised and very successful. Four teachers of German, all of them experienced in teaching this age group, **Silvija Bosner, Plamenka Bernardi Britvec, Dunja Kastela** and **Jadranka Salopek**, were the animators. Ljerka Biškupic Tomljenovic, an editor at Skolska knjiga, joined the group as well.

They all spoke about their experience in three years of experimental teaching of German with first graders in primary schools. They pointed out the specific problems of dealing with grammar and spelling and described how they had elaborated an approach in which rhymes and games were used to teach different language elements. They also presented a substantial amount of teaching materials, such as viewgraphs, transparencies, notebooks, drawings, and other work produced by the children.

Ljerka Biskupic Tomljenovic spoke about her picture book *Spass mit Deutsch* and her dictionary *ABC Deutsch.*

The former is a textbook for learners of the early school age. It is topic oriented, consists of ten units and is based on language tasks specified in the experimental programme for German in the first grade of primary school. It is adapted to the psycho-physical potential of the children aged 6-8, and the topics deal with the areas of interest of the children of this age group.

The picture book introduces a large number of words and structures, but the range of the vocabulary can easily be widened within the contexts dealing with children, their families, animals, toys, figures, colours, etc. Exercises are varied and they presuppose an understanding of the language material taught. The activities to be performed by the children include colouring, drawing, writing, etc. The sequencing of units is not strictly prescribed, allowing for different approaches by different teachers. Finally, illustrations done by Pika Vončina give ample scope for various language exercises.

The second book is a dictionary intended for learners of the early school age and is divided into two connected parts. The first part gives pictures in the alphabetic order and the second part is a dictionary consisting of pictures that lead the learner to words, sentences and finally to communicative patterns.

The pictorial dictionary presents a survey of the German alphabet. The letters, presented two by two, form units with language exercises, while each unit is illustrated and accompanied by a short text to practice basic grammatical and communicative elements.

The guiding principle in selecting the material was accessibility to young learners. Therefore, topics such as the family, friends, school, immediate environment, traditional holidays and customs and, above all, the world of toys and make believe are covered in the book. In the second part - the dictionary - each word is accompanied by basic

grammatical information and blanks to fill in, which is very helpful when introducing reading and writing to young learners. Meaning is conveyed via pictures, thus obviating the use of the mother tongue. Last but not least, illustrations by Ivan Vitez stimulate the child's creativity, leading him into the world of make-believe.

Cartoons adapted for the teaching of German were also shown at the workshop.

The participants showed a great deal of interest in everything that the animators had to say and present, and they asked many questions and made comments, which all made for a very lively discussion.

Much was said about the problems of language awareness and development of reading and writing skills, apparently causing many problems at the beginning stage of teaching foreign languages in all social contexts.

After two days of discussions, exchange of ideas and different approaches to almost identical problems, the participants agreed in their very high opinion of the work in the Croatian project.

5. A GLANCE AT THE SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Friday evening offered an opportunity to all the participants for especially interesting and varied social activities. First, there was a brilliant guitar performance by Ana Vidović, whose repertoire of J.S. Bach, A. Klobučar and M. Giuliani delighted the audience.

A spontaneous follow-up of a completely different kind took place immediately after that. The participants, who by then had established good communicative links, organized a Eurosong contest in the hotel restaurant. Inja Skender revealed another of her many talents. She proved to be an excellent show person. Different national groups of singers competed. The jury - U. Bliesener, F. Schimek, Y. Vrhovac and M. Vilke - had a very hard job in selecting the best group. Yet, their vote seems to have pleased all the contributors. Each contestant, that is, each group, received the same number of points - twelve. But the audience was still not quite satisfied. They demanded a musical presentation by the members of the jury, and so the jury decided to sing "Frere Jacques" in four languages - French, English, German and Croatian. The impressive quality of their singing could be compared only to the performance of the four musicians - which frightened away would-be burglars - in Grimm's well-known fairy-tale. But this group did not seem to frighten anyone, and so dancing, singing and chatting went on and on into the late night.

On Saturday afternoon the final event of the course took place: the excursion to the vicinity of Stubica, a spot full of reminiscences of the Croatian peasant uprising in the 16th century. The local school children, dressed in national costumes, sang and danced for the party, and the local farmers treated us to home made-brandy ("šljivovica") and home-baked bread, after which we visited an old picturesque castle, now the museum of the peasant uprising. The tour ended with a visit to Marija Bistrica, the national and world-known place of pilgrimage.

Everybody seems to have enjoyed the course. Friendships were forged, and people were sorry when the time came to say good-bye. Most of the Croatian participants had to rush home to take care of the daily chores neglected during these four days. Most of our foreign visitors had to catch their planes or trains. The remaining few went to a concert in the Lisinski music hall in the evening, thanks to the resourceful Mrs Naima Balić, who managed to bring them in even after the beginning of the performance. There they got a new insight into some aspects of Croatian culture and civilization.

6. EVALUATION OF THE COURSE

Towards the end of the course an evaluation sheet was given to the participants. 27 completed forms were returned, which represented just a little over 50% of the total, as some participants had left before the forms were distributed while the members of the Croatian project, naturally, did not fill them in.

On a scale 1 - 3 (1 - good, 2 - satisfactory, 3 - poor) the participants were asked to rate the following aspects of the seminar: content, presenters, visits to schools, social programme, organization, and the seminar as a whole.

Here is a summary of the responses:

- content: for 24 participants it was good, for 3 it was satisfactory;
- presenters: for 25 participants they were good, for 2 satisfactory;
- visits to schools: for 27 participants they were good;
- social programme: for 16 participants it was good, for 11 satisfactory;
- organization: for 17 participants it was good, for 10 satisfactory;
- seminar as a whole: all the 27 participants rated it as good.

It seems, therefore, that the general opinion is that the seminar as a whole was good; and, all the participants liked the visits to schools as well. Here are some of the comments on the seminar:

"I enjoyed meeting people from different centres and the Croatian organizers were most excellent hosts. Thank you very much for your hospitality."

"Excellent atmosphere".

"As usual, too short for such a lot of information."

Commenting on the content of the course, one of the participants stated: "Theory is very necessary but in some lectures I missed practical advice," whereas another one wanted "more new theoretical data".

Some considered that the most significant part of the seminar were visits to schools and workshops, a few people regretted that there had not been enough time for discussion after the lectures, as some lecturers did not obey the time limits.

The participants had some reservations regarding the organisation of social life, some wanted more integrated workshops, some wanted workshops organised in small groups.

However, the overall impression of the course was positive, without a single negative rating.

Personal communication of the project members with the participants pointed to the same conclusion: they all seem to have found the course useful and enjoyable, and one of the foreign visitors, in his letter, summed up his impressions simply by stating: "It was just great. Thank you."

Appendix I

Course Programme

ZAGREB

Wednesday, 4 May 1994

14.00 - 15.00	Registration of participants (Mimara Museum, Roosveltov trg 5)
15.00 - 17.00	Opening ceremony
	Welcome speeches
	Project children's performance
	English - Bukovac primary school (3rd grade) French - Mladost primary school (1st grade) M. Lovrak primary school (2nd grade) German - J.J. Strossmayer primary school Italian - A. Šenoa primary school (1st and 2nd grade) A. G Matoš primary school (2nd grade)
	M. Vilke: *Introducing Croatian Project* (summary in French)
17.00 - 17.30	Coffee break
17.30 - 18.30	J. Mihaljević-Djigunović, B. Bartolović: *Cognitive and Affective Characteristics of the Young FL Learner* (summary in French)
	R. Johnstone: *Data Gathering Procedures in the Scottish Project* (summary in French)
18.30 - 18.45	Discussion

19.00 Reception for the participants
Klub kulturnih radnika, Muzej za umjetnost i obrt, Trg M. Tita 10

Thursday, 5 May

9.00 - 12.30 Visits to Zagreb schools - observation of classes taking part in the Croatian project of early learning of English, German, French and Italian

14.00 Departure by bus to Stubičke toplice, a thermal spa in Hrvatsko Zagorje, about 20 km north-west of Zagreb where the remaining part of the seminar will take place

STUBIČKE TOPLICE

15.00 - 17.00 Language workshops - reports and discussions on the current state of the Croatian project

English: *Content Teaching* (L. Štokić, M. Tomaševic Dančević)
Learning through Playing (V. Nikpalj)
Teaching Time and Number of Pupils (M. Jagatić)

French: *Dramatisation* (J. Gajić)
Passage à l écrit (D. Šernhorst, A. Vrcan, G. Jelenski)
La transdisciplinarité dans l'enseignement du français
a) *Les activités d éveil et les arts plastiques* (T. Zobenica)
b) *Les mathématiques* (J. Strabić)
c) *L éducation physique* (M. Pokić)

German: *Grammatik auf der Anfangsstufe des Fremdsprachenunterrichts?*
Ja, aber wie? (S. Bosner, J. Salopek, P. Bernardi-Britvec, D. Kaštela)

17.00 - 17.30 Coffee break

17.30 - 18.45 Reports and presentations of the materials produced by Croatian teachers and researchers

English: *Me too* (M. Rijavec)
Presentation of different ELT materials (V. Anić)

French: *Bonjour Mimi* (I. Skender)
Ça va Toto (M. Pokić)

German: *Spaß mit Deutch* (Lj. Biškupic Tomljenović)

Italian: *Vieni con me* I (I. Damiani-Einwalter, M. Marković-Marinković, N. Sironić-Bonefačić)

Video cassettes (English, French, German, Italian)

20.30 International evening

Friday, 6 May

9.00 - 10.00 Y. Vrhovac: *Communication en langue étrangère par les petits apprenants* (summary in English)

U. Bliesener: *Designing a Curriculum for Teaching Foreign Languages in Primary School German Prospective (summary in French)*

10.00 - 10.30 Discussion

10.30 - 11.00 Coffee break

11.00 - 13.00 Language workshops continued: English, French, German

13.00 - 15.00 Lunch

15.00 - 16.00 N. Sironić-Bonefačić: *Acquisition de la lecture et de l écriture* (summary in English)

	F. Schimek: *Comprehension and Expression - Activities in the Austrian Project* (summary in French)
16.00 - 16.30	Discussion
16.30 - 17.00	Coffee break
17.00 - 18.00	D. Modard: *Formation des maîtres et continuité* (summary in English)
18.00 - 19.00	Round table: problems of teaching training and continuity (in English and French)
19.00	Dinner
20.30	Musical evening

Saturday, 7 May

9.00 - 10.00	Problems of continuity - ideas and suggestions
10.00 - 10.30	Conclusions
10.30 - 11.00	Coffee break
11.00 - 12.00	Proposals for future collaboration between the Croatian project and similar projects in other countries
13.00	Lunch
14.00	Tour of historic and scenic sights of Hrvatsko Zagorje (optional)

Invited Speakers

Dr. Ulrich Bliesener, Kulturministerium, Hanover, Germany
Professor Richard Johnstone, Sterling University, Great Britain
Daniel Modard, maître de conférence, Université de Rouen, France
Mag. Franz Schimek, Stadtsschulrat für Wien, Austria

Conveners:

Mirjana Vilke, Ph.D., Zagreb University
Yvonne Vrhovac, Ph.D., Zagreb University

English workshop animators: Vida Nikpalj and Lidvina Štokić
French workshop animator: Yvonne Vrhovac

Conference languages: English and French. Translation will be provided if and when required.

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Drago Vukušić, Restoran Hrvatski klub

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Appendix II

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Appendix Iii

Samples of Lesson Plans of the Classes Presented at Primary Schools

1. LESSON PLAN

School: Ante Kovačić, Zagreb
Class: 2nd A
EL teacher: Eleonora Kamenjarin

Who Took the Farmer's Hat? (a story)
Old MacDonald Had a Farm (a song)
We're Going on a Bear Hunt (a song)
Frog Show (a story)

Teaching aims:

Retelling the story, dramatizing the story, writing exercises, making sentences

Educational aims:

to love animals, to have sympathy for them, to be kind and modest, to support and encourage the week, to emphasise the importance of love (that can change the world)

Teaching techniques:

Dialogues, role-play, immitating, writing, rhythm drill

Teaching aids:

Pictures, toys, stones, picture-books ...

2. LESSON PLAN

LA MAISON

Nom de l' enseignante: Alemka Vrcan
Public: classe d'enfants de 8 ans
Niveau: 2e année de français (à raison de 5 heures par semaine)
Matériel: collage d' une maison meublée (intérieur), cartons avec des mots, maison vide en carton, mobilier (jouets)
Durée: 45 minutes

Objectifs:

- réviser le vocabulaire concernant la maison
- réviser les articles indéfinis
- savoir former des groupes logiques de mots
- savoir associer un mot à une image
- réviser les numéros ordinaux
- utiliser les notions de l'espace
- utiliser les actes de parole - ordre, demande, contradiction
- stimuler le travail en petits groupes

Déroulement:

activité 1 - les apprenants doivent former des groupes logiques à partir des cartons sur lesquels sont écrits divers objets qu'on peut trouver dans la maison. Le collage affiché au tableau peut les aider.

activité 2 - à la demande de l'enseignante ou d'un apprenant les élèves doivent placer l'objet choisi dans la pièce indiquée.

activité 3 - les apprenants doivent deviner l'objet que l'enseignante ou un apprenant a imaginé et qui se trouve dans la maison en carton.

3. AUFBAU DER UNTERRICHTSSTUNDE

Schule: Josip Juraj Strossmayer, Zagreb
Lehrerin: Jadranka Salopek
Datum der Stunde: der 5. Mai 1994
Klasse: IIIa - 16 Schüler

Lernziele:

Sprechen, Schreiben, Wiederholung der Präpositionen, Modalverba

Thema der Stunde:

Ich bin größer als du! (Komparativ)

Arbeitsmittel:

Bilderbuch, Tafel, Bilder, Hefte, OHP

VERLAUF DER STUNDE

Einführung - L stellt Fragen an S

Wie heißt du?
Wo wohnst du?
Wie alt bist du?
Wie geht es dir?
Wie ist das Wetter heute?

Hauptteil/Frontalunterricht - L stellt Fragen an S

Kannst du pfeifen? - Zeig mal!
* S pfeift
Kannst du singen? - Sing mal!
Kannst du schreiben?
Darfst du hier pfeifen?
Mußt du viel lernen?
Kinder, könnt ihr zeichnen?

* Die Schüler zeichnen was der Lehrer sagt.
So entsteht an der Tafel ein Bild.

L Zeichne bitte ein Haus.
Das Haus hat zwei Fenster und eine Tür.
Neben dem Haus ist ein Apfelbaum.
Vor dem Haus ist ein Garten.
In Garten sind viele Blumen.
Vor dem Garten ist eine lange Straße.
Auf der Straße ist ein Auto.
Das Auto ist blau.
Das Wetter ist schön.
Die Sonne ist gelb.
Die Straße ist grau.

* Die Schüler beschreiben die Zeichnung.

S Das Dach ist rot.
Der Baum ist grün.
Die Äpfel sind rot.
Die Blumen sind bunt.
Die Straße ist grau.
Das Auto ist blau.
Die Sonne ist gelb.

* OHP - die Schüler beschreiben das Bild.

L Wie hoch ist das Haus?
Wie breit ist das Haus?
Wie lang ist die Straße?

* Die Schüler messen und beantworten die Fragen.

L Was ist größ**er**, das Haus oder das Auto?
L Das Haus ist größ**er als** das Auto.

* Die Schüler bilden Sätze:

Der Baum ist größ**er** als das Auto.
Die Straße ist läng**er** als das Haus.
Die Blume ist klein**er** als der Baum.

Das Fenster ist kleiner als die Tür.

* Die Tafel

Herr Maier ist dick.
Herr Schuber ist dünn.
Herr Maier ist dicker als Herr Schuber.
Die Schnecke ist langsam.
Die Biene ist schnell.
Die Biene ist schneller als die Schnecke.
Der Elefant ist groß.
die Maus ist klein.
Die Maus ist kleiner als der Elefant.

* Schlußteil

L Wie sieht deine Familie aus?
Wer ist dicker, die Mutter oder der Vater?
S (Der) Mein Vater ist dicker als meine Mutter.

L Wer ist schöner, die Mutter oder der Vater?
S Meine Mutter ist schöner als mein Vater.

4. PIANA DELLA LEZIONE

Scuola: Antun Gustav Matoš, Zagabria
Lingua: italiano
Classe: seconda elementare
Insegnante: Dubravka Novak

Svolgimento della Lezione

Unita didactica: La nostra città

Finalità didattiche: stimolare gli allievi alla creatività

Argomenti trattati:
orientamento nell'ambiente urbano, uso dei mezzi di trasporto

Strutture linguistiche:
presente del verbo *andare*, indicazioni di luogo - *a destra, a sinistra, intorno, dietro, vicino a, davanti, di fronte,* ecc.

Attività linguistiche degli allievi:
conversazione, descrizione, scrittura, lettura, giochi, canto

Sussidi didattici:
plastici in cartone colorato dei diversi monumenti della città (palazzi, chiese, piazze, alberghi, parchi, mezzi di trasporto urbano, persone)

Prima fase:
Conversazione tra l'insegnante e gli allievi - Zagabria città antica e moderna (in occasione del Novecentenario della città). Descrizione dell'ambiente vicino alla scuola.

Seconda fase:
Facendo delle domande e rispondendo gli allievi collocano i plastici dei monumenti nello spazio e cosí costruiscono progressivamente la loro città. Domande: *Dove andate? Dove vai?* (al cinema, a teatro, al mercato, ecc.); *Dov'è il cinema,* ecc.? (vicino, dietro a, a destra, a sinistra, ecc.); *Come ci vai?* (a piedi, in tram, ecc.); *Perché...*?

Terza fase:

Gli allievi scrivono alla lavagna alcune frasi con il verbo andare. Il testo viene letto e copiato sui quaderni. Le frasi scritte servono da modello a diverse trasformazioni orali.

Quarta fase:

Gli allievi costruiscono una casa usando un modello scomponibile in cartone. La loro attività è accompagnata dalla descrizione della costruzione.

Quinta fase:

Alla fine dalla lezione gli allievi cantano la canzone "Una casa in via dei matti" di Sergio Endrigo.

Appendix IV

List of Materials Produced in the Croatian Project

Children and Foreign Languages, ed. by M. Vilke, Y. Vrhovac, University of Zagreb, 1993.

Maja Rijavec, *Me, too 1, English for Children*, Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 1993.

Yvonne Vrhovac, Željka Horvat-Vukelja, *Bonjour Mimi*, Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 1993.

Yvonne Vrhovac, Željka Horvat-Vukelja, *Ça va Toto*, Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 1994.

Ljerka Biškupić, *Spaß mit Deutsch I*, Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 1991.

Ljerka Biškupić, *ABC Deutsch*, Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 1992.

Ingrid Damiani Einwalter, Mirjana Marković Marinković, Nives Sironić Bonefačić, *Vieni con me I*, Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 1994.

Four 60 minutes video cassetes produced by FILMOTEKA 16:

- *English with first graders* (M. Vilke, B. Makarović)
- *Insegnamento dell'italiano nelle prime classi delle elementari* (N. Sironić Bonefačić, B. Makarović)
- *Deutsch für Grundschulanfänger* (M. Kruhan, B. Makarović)
- *Le français en première année de primaire* (Y. Vrhovac, B. Makarović)

Three video cassettes entitled *Storytime* (in English, French and German).